

# REPENTANCE

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## FOREWORD

The writer, during a short ministry, in widely scattered sections of the country has been greatly impressed by the great number of earnest persons who were not enjoying the peace of mind, "which passeth understanding" and which comes to all who earnestly and truly repent of their sins, and exercise faith in God through Christ.

In an earnest effort to help such ones find this soul rest, I have discovered that while many have "joined the church," great numbers of them had never known the meaning of repentance and had, therefore, never really repented of their sins and as a result they were yet without salvation, therefore, without peace of mind and soul rest.

With a sincere desire to help all men, everywhere, understand what it means to repent, and with a passionate desire to lead many into an experience of conscious acceptance with God, through Christ, as a result of their repentance and faith, this little booklet is sent forth, and may God grant that it shall prove a blessing to all into whose hands it may fall!



## REPENTANCE

HENRY A. SCREWS, JR.

Text: "*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*"—Luke 13:3.

Over the network of telegraph wires, stretched across the nation, there flashes a frantic message. Operators in all the cities over the land receive, and make public the message. It reads: "Hundreds perish in storm—hundreds are needing relief." This message is carried to the outside world by the large daily newspapers. Across the front pages of these papers, emblazoned in large headlines is the message, "Hundreds perish in storm." The appeal for aid is sent out and the people of a nation rally to the call. Thousands of dollars are subscribed! Nurses and doctors volunteer for service and special trains speed them to the scene. Why this excitement? Why this generous, and sacrificial giving of self and means? Out there in the storm-swept territory, above the howling of the winds, we can hear the answer to these questions, in the screams of those who are perishing, in the wake of the storm.

Again, we see a crowd standing before a bulletin board. A notice is posted. Down the streets, and up the ave-

nues, throughout the town, from house to house, from person to person, rapidly spreads the latest news. Places of business are closed. The wheels of industry cease—pleasure-mad throngs forget their social engagements; plate glass windows are covered over with heavy boards; awnings are rolled up; houses are braced and the streets are deserted, save the mad crowd of refugees who are fleeing before the storm. What has caused all this excitement; this feverish haste; this forsaking of business, of pleasure, of home and town? Ah! here on the bulletin board is the notice which explains all. Here, is posted a warning, the substance of which is, "The storm is heading toward this town. There is danger that hundreds shall perish here, even as in the other cities, and towns in the path of the storm!"

The warning of physical danger is posted and heeded! This is as it should be; but all such warnings as these, pale into insignificance, in comparison with the warning of spiritual danger and spiritual disaster, which threaten to come upon all men who fail to heed the warning, and flee from the wrath to come. The infallible account, as contained in the Scriptures, of spiritual death, which has been the lot of careless and impenitent individuals and

nations, of all the past ages, from Adam to the present day, is the common property of all men. Even upon every awakened conscience is stamped, indelibly, the warning, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." This great warning concerns souls for both time and eternity, therefore, it behooves every man, woman and child, to lay aside all business, pleasure, and possessions, that they may more earnestly enquire into this warning, and seek a means of escape.

There are two great truths which stand out in this text, into which we should earnestly enquire. The first of these truths is the fact that all men are in danger of perishing, and the second is that repentance is the only means by which any man may escape perishing, spiritually.

The first question which we must settle in the light of the teachings of God's Word is,—Why are all men in danger of perishing? This question is answered by God's own word, "The wages of sin is death." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Death was the penalty, imposed by God himself, upon the soul that committed sin, and the Word tells us that, "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." David, in his great prayer for the remission of sin declares, "Behold, I was shapen in



iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." The Scriptures teach that all men are born into the world with an inherited bias to sin, therefore, "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin." Then, in the light of these truths, all men are in danger of perishing because of sin, both actual and original.

Sin, the greatest enemy of peace and happiness known to God or man is, in the spiritual realm, analogous to the storm in the material realm. It sweeps through the land, destroying the peace, joy, and happiness of mankind here, and the hopes of it hereafter. It brings about the physical death of millions, and sends souls hastening into the presence of the great Judge of all the earth, burdened and blackened by sin's guilty stain. The decree of God has been made. No sin can enter heaven, the eternal abode of the righteous and merciful God: The happy, eternal home of the redeemed of all ages, prepared by a Holy God for a holy people. Now—an immortal soul—one that must live on, while the years of eternity roll stands on the threshold of eternity. Sin has barred the gates of heaven against that soul! Out into the regions of the damned it must go. "The wages of sin is death." All men are in danger of perishing then, because sin has entered the world.



There are many who would minimize sin, humanize God and Deify man; and would destroy the great truth of this text, by making the salvation of an immortal soul the result of an extended process of education, rather than the result of repentance, embracing sorrow for sin, turning from sin, saving faith in Jesus Christ, and the regeneration by the Holy Ghost; but in direct opposition to this theory is the infallible teaching of Jesus Christ that except men repent they shall *all* perish. The second great truth, set forth by this text is, that the only means of escape, from spiritual death, is by the way of repentance.

The fact of sin, and the need of outside help to peace of mind and righteousness of life, is deeply felt in the universal heart of the race. This peace of mind and righteousness of life, together with man's redemption,—his justification, regeneration and sanctification, was purchased by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and is offered to every man who will, because of godly sorrow forsake all sin, turn from sin and serve the true and the living God, and be saved "By grace through faith." God, through Christ, has redeemed the race. Man's part in his own salvation is to accept salvation by meeting God's conditions, the first of which is repentance. No person can be educated into salvation. They may be educated as to *how*

they may seek and find salvation but, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" is the teaching of the Master; therefore, our salvation is conditioned upon our repentance, and except we repent we have neglected our salvation; we are yet in our sins and shall perish; not because God is unjust but rather because he is just, and must allow every man to be judged, and dealt with, according to the deeds done in the body, and in keeping with His revealed plan of salvation.

While salvation is of God's free grace, it is none the less of man's free choice. One prominent scholar has said: "Personal salvation is a result of co-operation between God and man, between the divine and the human will." We may conclude then, that man cannot save himself, neither can God save him, according to God's revealed principles of moral government, unless man himself, of his own free will, chooses to meet the stated conditions of salvation. As has already been said, of these conditions, as revealed by God the Father, through God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, repentance is the first demanded of a sinner in order to his salvation; therefore, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Since, "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin" and salvation is condi-

tioned upon man's repentance, it behooves every man to examine his own heart, to know whether or not he has met the first condition. Woe is that man who seeks to substitute mere church joining, the assuming of the obligations of the secret orders (though good these may be) or any mere form of worship or morality, for this, the first condition to be met by man in order to his salvation—repentance.

Repentance has been well defined as being "That act of an awakened sinner by which, with sincere and godly sorrow on account of his sin, he resolves, God helping him, to forsake, utterly and unconditionally *all* sin, now, henceforth and forever." To this splendid definition is added "To attain saving faith and personal salvation without renouncing *all* sin, or at least without a sincere purpose of so doing, is a moral impossibility." In the light of this definition, to say nothing of the teaching of God's word (with which this definition perfectly agrees) those exponents of the theory that man must necessarily sin a little every day, even until the day of his death, will fare badly when they shall stand before the judgment bar of a Just and Righteous Judge, the efficacy of whose atonement, and the adequacy of whose saving and keeping powers, these impenitent ones have de-



nied in word, thought and deed. May the message of our Lord be sealed, by the Holy Spirit, to every sinful soul, "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," and may they be made to realize that repentance involves the forsaking of all sin.

A more detailed study of the Bible doctrine of repentance will reveal to every earnest seeker for truth the fact that genuine repentance consists of several elements. Let us then consider these several elements, in their order, and examine our own hearts as we do so, to determine whether or not we have really met this, the first condition to be met, in order to our salvation.

In 2nd Cor. 7:10 we read, "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of, but the sorrow of the world worketh death." The first element, to be considered then, is godly sorrow.

There is a vast difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow. Worldly sorrow may be occasioned by detection, threatened punishment or disgrace. It is that sorrow which dreads the temporal consequences of wrong doing but not that sorrow which hates the sin itself. The bank robber, who has laid his plans well, and who has planned a perfect crime, is caught while in the act of carrying out his plans. He



is placed in prison. His plans have failed, he is penniless, and now he faces a long prison term; he experiences worldly sorrow. He is sorry that he was caught, but the chances are, if he had the opportunity he would attempt the robbery again in spite of this sorrow. He hates the detection, the failure, the punishment and not the sin. Such sorrow as this worketh death, not repentance.

Godly sorrow is that sorrow which is born of an awakened conscience. This sorrow causes one to admit his guilt, abhor his sin and he realizes that this sin separates him from God. He, therefore, dreads the moral consequences of sin, and will begin to search for a means of escape, both from the fact and the consequences of sin. A thief, who experiences godly sorrow for sin, will abhor that sin, and forsake it even before he is detected. He will forsake it because he hates the sin, and not simply because it has found him out.

When the sorrow for sin is godly sorrow, it will result in a resolution, on the part of the awakened and penitent sinner, to forsake all known sin. Forsaking sin, then, is the second element of genuine repentance, which we shall consider. If this resolution is the result of godly sorrow, the penitent will resolve to forsake all sin, and that, uncon-

ditionally. It is not for man to name the conditions upon which he will accept salvation from sin. Man is, in his natural state, a sinful, fallen, lost and helpless being. His only hope of eternal life is in God. His only redemption is in Christ Jesus. It is for man to cry, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He may find the answer in God's Holy Word, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Many troubled souls have failed to experience the joy of salvation because they have refused to forsake all sin, unconditionally. Many have failed to find that peace which "passeth all understanding" because they were willing to lay hold upon the promise, only upon the condition that they should first have a great "feeling" or that they might receive divine assurance, that they could, and would, "hold out." There is no provision, in the Bible doctrine of repentance, whereby man may conditionally forsake sin and turn to God; but rather, all men, must forsake all sin, unconditionally, in order to genuine repentance and, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Self-righteousness has never saved a single individual, nor can it ever save one. Were it not for preventing grace, man's depravity would be total. By grace we are saved, through faith—

faith in the atoning blood of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and it is only for the merit of Christ that we are accounted righteous before God, and that by faith and not for any works or deservings of our own. Therefore, in order to forgiveness, man must confess his sinfulness to God, and plead the merit of the spilled blood of Jesus Christ. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Again, the Scriptures teach us to "Confess our faults, one to the other." We are also taught, that if a man brings his gift to the altar and he remembers there, that his brother has aught against him, he shall leave his gift at the altar, go and be reconciled to his brother, then come again and offer his gift, and it will be accepted. This does not mean that any man upon earth has the power to forgive sins against God; but it does mean, if we have wronged a fellow-man, or if ill feeling exists between us, these differences must be settled before our repentance is complete. If a man has not the moral courage to confess to a fellow-being that he has sinned against him, surely he will not have the courage to face the great God of the universe, and confess that he has sinned against Him.

Along with this confession of having



wronged a fellow-man, restitution must be made. If one has stolen from his neighbour, his confession, and request for forgiveness could not be taken seriously by God or man, should the penitent refuse to make restitution. Zacchæus would never have been saved had he not been willing to "restore four-fold" and give the half of his goods to feed the poor whom he had robbed. We must remember, in this connection, it is not necessary to take from our neighbour, at the point of a gun or under the cover of the deep night shades, to be stealing from him. There are thousands of the poor, underprivileged classes who are being robbed daily by the capitalists who employ them. There are thousands of "gossippers" who are daily robbing pure and innocent people of all that they have, their reputation, because of jealousy, envy, and such like. The liquor interests are literally stealing the bread from the mouths of millions, of already undernourished children, and from the mouths of widows, while the church member, in many instances, is aiding and abetting in this nefarious practice by using the God-given power of the ballot, to legalize this wholesale robbery. If the bread was all that this gang was stealing, it would be bad enough, but worse than this, the same gang is stealing the last traces of man-



hood left in some poor, miserable wretch, who is a slave to their damnable goods, and they are helping to send him into the presence of the great God who has declared that no drunkard can enter Heaven. We can but believe that the gang that helped to make the drunkard, by the vote as well as otherwise, will, with him, stand at a guilty distance from God in that great and awful day of God's judgment. If over this land of ours individuals and nations would begin to confess their sins against God and man, would seek forgiveness, and make restitution, such tidal waves of salvation as the world has never witnessed would sweep down upon us, wars would cease, suffering would disappear, and the world would be a veritable paradise.

Instead of the above described conditions, the world is steeped in sin; murder, war, famine, drunkenness, revelings, adultery, suffering and the like, are cursing and damning the race. Frantic efforts are being made to find a solution of the problems social, economic, and political, but, alas! how far we have departed from the "Gospel way." While thousands—yea, millions are plunging into eternity, without God and without hope of salvation, many are seeking to destroy the very foundations upon which our civilization was established:

—upon which it must forever stand, if stand it shall. That foundation is faith in God, and in Jesus Christ His only begotten Son, and in the atoning blood of Christ, which was shed for all men. “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1st Cor. 3:11).

The inspiration of the Scriptures, the virgin birth and Godhead of Jesus Christ, is being questioned, yea, even denied by many blasphemous individuals. Old-time revivals, where souls spent hours in agonizing, prevailing prayer before God, seeking forgiveness for sins: where the shouts of the new-born souls in Christ rent the air, and where the shouts of glory went up from scores of throats, has been branded “mob psychology” and the “mourner’s bench” has largely been abandoned. Decision Day, card signing and the like have been substituted. The churches have been crowded with individuals who have never known what repentance really was; who have never known the joy of the consciousness of sins forgiven, in answer to the cry of the penitent who was waiting before God: who are not unlike the world; but rather who partake of practically all the sinful practices of the world, and as a result the church has suffered along spiritual and financial lines.

In this period of unrest, when the moral standards have been lowered to the vanishing point; when the dominant question in every realm is "What is secure?" the church faces the greatest period of opportunity for service it has ever faced. The only message that she can give to a troubled, sin-cursed world, in an hour like this, that will result in the salvation of the multitudes, and the salvation of society as a whole, is the message of our text, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" and the world must be made to realize that one of the elements of genuine repentance as set forth above, is confession—confession of sin, and confession of Jesus Christ, as Lord and Saviour.

The last element of genuine repentance which we shall consider is *amendment*. This is the natural result of a resolution to forsake, unconditionally, all sin, when that resolution springs from godly sorrow, and is sincere and heartfelt to that extent that it has led to the confession of sin and the acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

If a man were to strike me in the back and then say, "Please forgive me, I am sorry," I would believe his repentance was genuine only if he amended his way and refrained from striking me again. This is true with every man;



nevertheless, there are multitudes who expect to presume upon the mercies of God: say, "I am sorry" only to go straightway into sin again, and finally come out to meet God and be saved by some miracle. Woe to all such! Amendment is a necessary element of repentance and, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

May God grant that all men everywhere shall experience such godly sorrow for sin, that sleep and rest shall forsake them until they shall sincerely resolve to forsake, unconditionally, all sin, and shall confess to God and to those whom they have wronged; making restitution as they do so; and that their confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour; shall be followed by such amendment as to convince a gainsaying world of the power of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, to cleanse from all sin, and result in all kindreds, tribes and tongues joining in the chorus:

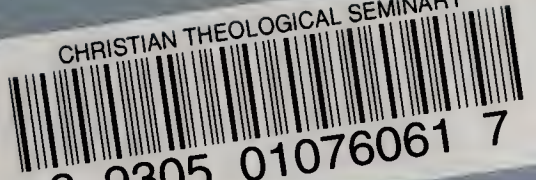
"All hail the power of Jesus' name!  
Let angels prostrate fall;  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown Him Lord of all."







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